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ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY ASPECTS OF THE FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING OPERATIONS

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of 17 peace-keeping operations (A/C.5/48/40). In this connection, the Secretary-General states in paragraphs 2 and 3 of his report that items on the agenda of the Fifth Committee related to the financing of peace-keeping operations may have to be postponed until the resumed session of the Assembly in April owing to the priority given for completing consideration of agenda item 123, "Proposed programme budget for 1994-1995". To provide for the operational requirements of the peace-keeping operations, he is therefore requesting that the General Assembly grant him financial authority for the maintenance of those operations through 30 April 1994. The requirements for each operation are briefly outlined in the remainder of his report.

2. The Advisory Committee's comments and recommendations with regard to each peace-keeping operation are contained in separate reports. In this connection, the Committee understands that the Secretary-General's report represents a compilation of the operations' requirements for ease of reference only; the Committee was informed that this approach represented an exceptional measure in order to expedite the approval of resources necessary for the maintenance of the operations. The Committee further understands that this in no way implies an attempt to submit a consolidated overall budget for peace-keeping operations.

3. Each of the peace-keeping operations is dealt with in a separate subsection of the Secretary-General's report. However, the Advisory Committee emphasizes that those subsections in no way constitute the "normal" performance/financing reports submitted by the Secretary-General. The Committee, notwithstanding the explanations provided by the Secretary-General, expresses its serious concern in this regard, noting that it represents a lack of budgetary discipline and erodes the role of the General Assembly.

4. The Advisory Committee regrets the trend in recent years for the late submission of documentation, including reports on the financing of peace-keeping operations. Despite requests for corrective action, the situation in this regard has steadily worsened. Notwithstanding the special circumstances prevailing this year with regard to the review of the proposed programme budget, the Advisory Committee believes that all of the peace-keeping reports should have been submitted in a more timely manner; the circumstances related to the regular budget are irrelevant to the timely submission of the peace-keeping reports.

5. The Committee therefore requests the Secretary-General to take corrective measures to prevent the recurrence of such a situation and report to the Committee on the implementation of those measures. The Committee also requests that all reports which have not yet been submitted be available by 15 January 1994. In preparing these and future reports the Secretary-General should take into account the recommendations of the Committee in its report (A/47/990) in order to improve the presentation and type of information contained in such reports.

6. That being said, the Committee recognizes that resources are required to ensure the continuation of the operations in question. The Committee therefore undertook as best a review as was feasible, given the information before it and time constraints. The Committee points out that in a number of instances its recommendations relate only through 31 March 1994 rather than 30 April. The amounts to be recommended in future by the Committee in respect of the various peace-keeping operations will take into account the performance during the initial months, thereby effecting a de facto adjustment as necessary to the amounts now being recommended.

7. The recommendations of the Advisory Committee with regard to the various peace-keeping operations took into account not only requirements for expenditure but also requisite assessment levels. The recommendations of the Committee in respect of each operation are for commitment authority rather than appropriation in view of the fact that the relevant budgets have not been considered and approved. However, consistent with past practice, amounts authorized by the Assembly for commitment can be assessed and apportioned. In a number of cases, the amount recommended for assessment is less than the amount recommended for commitment in view of available cash balances, or the unencumbered balances of appropriations.

8. The Committee stresses that its agreement to consider the Secretary-General's report and make recommendations thereon derived solely from the need to provide for the continuation of the operations in question. It does not constitute a precedent and should not be viewed as such.